

things were remembered, the habit of being tardy would be largely remedied. A certain minister cured his people of tardiness by referring to the annoyance late comers occasioned him, and how they disturbed others. He said, "This is to be kept firmly in our minds. We have an appointment to meet our God in this house at half-past ten o'clock in the morning, and at half-past seven o'clock in the evening of each Lord's day. By divine permission the people have fixed these hours of worship to suit their own convenience. Those who are needlessly late treat the divine Being with a disrespect which would offend a human being. We need not be surprised if wanton disrespect delays God's blessing or deprives us of it altogether."

A New Department

Within the last month we have received no less than fifteen or twenty queries to which answers are requested. We shall be glad to answer any queries sent in, and for this purpose we have added a new department, "Queries and Answers." The department will be continued as long as our friends keep us supplied with queries. While we solicit queries, we do not care to spend time on useless questions, intended only to provoke discussion. All reasonable inquiries will receive our attention.

Use A Little Oil

The use of oil in some form antedates all our modern machinery for the successful operation of which it is now absolutely essential. Formerly it had a sacred use, being employed in setting aside those whom God called to some special office or for some special service in his kingdom. Its use was a sign of Divine grace and carried with it a prophetic intimation. It was also used because of its healing virtues, and hence the apostle James directs its use in cases of sickness, being the outward sign of the inward healing which must be in the name of the Lord.

But it is not the use of oil in this sense of which we now wish to write. Oil has been used very successfully in pacifying the raging billows in the vicinity of vessels. Bags filled with oil are hung from the ship, and the calming effect on the waves is marvelous. Recently another use of oil has been discovered. It is now being used in quieting the dust along railroad tracks, and the result is very gratifying, especially to the traveling public. By means of a specially designed sprinkler, the Pennsylvania Company has oiled miles of its tracks, and where formerly a passing train raised a thick cloud of dust, the experiment has entirely done away with, what to the traveler at least, is a great nuisance. The vast machinery of this world could not be operated without the use of oil. It reduces friction to the minimum, hence less

sens the power required to run machinery and causes it to run more smoothly.

This pacifying, soothing and quieting effect of oil has its lessons for us, when, figuratively, applied to the varied experiences of human life. Individual, home, church, social and national life, makes up the vast machinery of human existence. The free and judicious use of the oil of kindness, of love, of forgiveness and of forbearance, would greatly lessen friction and have a very soothing effect on the machinery of human life. Home life is often disturbed and rendered unhappy by the thick clouds of dust, raised by current conflicts, by unkind words and by thoughtlessness on the part of some member of the family. The oil of mutual kindness and love is a great preventative of such conditions of life, and where they do exist, it has a very pacifying and sweetening influence. A frequent application of the oil of God's love, the oil of gospel grace, the oil of charity, would have a very sweet and calming effect on our national life, and indeed would heal all the wounds and ills of our social life. There is too much friction in the social world, caused by the wrong use of God-given gifts, a misuse of God's machinery. Our social life needs an application of this oil to make it run smoothly. The clanging, clashing, bickerings, and meaningless discussions in our national Congress and in our state legislatures, would find an application of the oil of common sense very helpful indeed, and greatly aid our legislators in doing the will of the people. In every department of human life, a free use of oil would make the machinery of the social world run with far less friction. Then too, in the church of God there is often too much friction. How often our hearts are made to bleed because of the sad state of affairs that exist among those who claim to be the children of God. The one thing needed here is a copious application of the oil of the Holy Spirit, to calm the troubled waters, to cheer weary souls and to heal heartaches and wounds. A judicious application of the oil of redeeming grace would completely remove the friction that exists between members of the same church, and between those of different denominations.

The Week Of Prayer

On Sabbath January 2 began what is known as the "Week of Prayer," which continued one week, closing Sabbath January 9. Thousands of Christian people met each evening during that week at their respective places of worship, and what multitudes of prayers went up to the Father in heaven. Will these prayers be answered? It depends upon the faith in which and with which they were offered, the things we asked for, and the definiteness of our prayers. A great many prayers ask for nothing and of course the

offerer gets nothing. Other prayers are so indefinite that if the Lord were not All-wise he would be unable to determine from the prayer what the man wants. Here are some pointed words from Dr. Horton, England, that may be of help to us in our prayer:

I confess I am tired of answers to prayer when the prayer is only for those carnal and visible things which are often, in boundless love and pity, withheld. The constant and proper things to pray for are precisely those the advent of which cannot be observed or tabulated; that the kingdom may come, that they who have sinned not unto death may be forgiven, that the eyes of Christian men may be enlightened and their hearts expanded to the measure of the love of Christ. Such prayers are answered, but the answers are not unveiled. I remember a strange instance of this. I was staying with a gentleman in a great town, where the town council, of which he was a member, had just decided to close a music hall which was exercising a pernicious influence. The decision was most unexpected, because a large party in the council were directly interested in the hall. But to my friend's amazement the men who had threatened opposition came in and quietly voted for withdrawing the license. Next day we were speaking about modern miracles; he, the best of men, expressed the opinion that miracles were confined to Bible times. His wife then happened to mention how, on the day of that council meeting, she and some other good women of the city had met and continued in prayer that the license might be withdrawn. I ventured to ask my friend whether this was not the explanation of what he had confessed to be an amazing change of front on the part of the opposition. And, strange to say, it had not occurred to him, tho an avowed believer in prayer, to connect the praying women and that beneficent vote. The truth is, all the threads of good which run across our checkered society, all the impulses upward and onward, all the invisible growths in goodness and grace, are answered prayers.

A Correction

On page one of this issue under "Do They Read It?" instead of *Nov. 1, 1897* read *Dec. 1, 1897*. Also 1897, instead of 1867. The error is our own but was not discovered till the first side of the paper was run off.

Personal Mention

At Corinth, Ind., Brother Ditch closed a meeting with two accessions.

Brother R. E. Darling has undergone quite a siege of sickness. He is now able to sit up as much as an hour at a time.

Brother E. E. Haskins began revival services in Johnstown January 10. Good crowds each night and excellent attention to the preached word.

Brother J. C. Cassel, secretary and treasurer of the Publication Board, spent Monday night, Tuesday and Tuesday night with us. He was on his way to Chicago where the National Mission Board meets January 20. Tho here on business his stay with us